at US$ 108.80 billion, as against exports estimated at US $74.97 billion during April-January, 2005-06

(c) The value of import of gold to India was US$ 10.3 billion during 2004-05 as compared with US$6.5 billion in 2003-04. The value of exports of gems and jewellery was 13.7 billion in 2004-05 as compared with US$10.6 billion during 2003-04.

Recommendations made by NMCC

884. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC) has recently made certain recommendations about how to achieve 12 per cent growth in the manufacturing sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have examined the recommendations and chalked out any action plan in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (d) The National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council has finalised its report on devising a strategy for manufacturing. The recommendations *inter-alia* aim at stepping up the rate of growth of manufacturing to 12% per annum. The report has not yet been adopted by the Government.

FTAs with neighbours

885. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE & INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to launch a major exercise to hasten Free Trade Agreements with its neighbours;

(b) if so, the details of the talks held with each country;

(c) the outcome thereof;